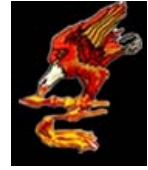




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Wed, Mar 19, 2008 at 2:11 AM



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Gov. Togiola travels to Rose Atoll (Nu'uomanu) on NOAA ship Hi'ialakai

(UTULEI) - Governor Togiola Tulafono today joined National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) scientists on their cooperative study trip to Rose Atoll (Nu'uomanu) on the NOAA marine science research ship, Hi'ialakai.

The cooperative study of American Samoa is to assess and monitor the health of the Territory's coral reef resources. Governor Togiola expressed his sincere gratitude to NOAA's Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center, Coral Reef Ecosystem Division, National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, University of Hawai'i, and NOAA Office of Marine and Aviation Operations for the opportunity to visit Rose Atoll, the sole island of American Samoa that he has not visited since he has been governor.

"I would like to thank NOAA and its hardworking and committed partner agencies for inviting me to go on this exciting educational trip because I have always had a personal interest in our coral reef and marine areas," said Governor Togiola. "Collectively, NOAA and its partners have accomplished so much in their studies of our environment and I applaud the importance of NOAA and its partners and the very important role they play in helping us better understand our coral reef ecosystem and surroundings. I am also very grateful for this opportunity to visit Rose Atoll, the only part of American Samoa that I have not visited. So, this is a very special and historic trip for me and I am truly thankful."

The study is part of the biennial monitoring in the region conducted by PIFSC and NMFS based in Hawai'i. Scientists on the trip with Governor Togiola include Dr. Peter Vroom, Dr. Rusty Brainard, Dr. Robert Schroeder and 19 other scientists.

Governor Togiola will return to the Territory on Friday morning.

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